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THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PEACE.*

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AT THE HAGUE.

THE origin of the Conference is well known. Proposed by the Czar of Russia, and summoned, at his instance, by the Queen of the Netherlands, the Conference met in the city of The Hague, on the 18th of May of the current year, and remained in session until it adjourned *sine die* on the 29th of July. It was attended by delegates from twenty-six Powers. Of these, twenty were European, two American and four Asiatic. It is interesting to compare this with the membership of the International Marine Conference, the first world Conference ever held for purposes of *quasi* legislation, which met in Washington at the call of the United States Government in 1889. At that Conference, twenty-eight Powers were represented, fourteen European, eleven American (including Hawaii), and three Asiatic.

At the Conference of Peace, the European Powers were Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France, Great Britain and Ireland, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Holland, Portugal, Roumania, Russia, Servia, Sweden and Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, and Bulgaria. The American Powers were the United States of America, and Mexico. The Asiatic Powers were China, Japan, Persia and Siam. Each Power had one vote, but was represented by as many delegates as it chose.

*The writer, having been a member of the Commission representing the United States at the International Conference at The Hague, has endeavored to state accurately not only the action of the Conference, but also the attitude of the American delegation. He has done this, however, in his own words, and from his own point of view; so that he alone, and not any of his colleagues, is responsible for the statements contained in this paper. The purpose of the paper is to give to the ordinary reader, as distinguished from the student, a general idea of the Conference and its work. The student should turn to the official reports of the American Commission, which alone can speak with authority on behalf of the Commission.

The first thing to be observed about the membership of the Conference is that, like its predecessor the International Marine Conference, it included nations from America and Asia, as well as from Europe; and the second is that the representation of Europe and of Asia was much more complete than that of America. It is striking that the entire Continent of Africa, once the seat of power of the Pharaohs and of Carthage, contains to-day no nation that was invited. It is not known to the writer why the nations of Central and South America were not represented. The notable sub-division of Europe into separate and independent Powers, as compared with the other continents represented, is strikingly evident from the composition of the Conference. When one recalls that a similar list of the European Powers made a century ago would have shown a still greater sub-division, one cannot help wondering whether the process of amalgamation is yet complete. On the one side is the astonishing persistence of national types, even when limited to small areas, affecting language, customs, and, until very recently, also dress; but, upon the other side, are all the tendencies of the age, as illustrated, as forcibly as anywhere, in the industrial and commercial world. The practical inconveniences arising from custom-houses at short intervals, from changing currencies during every long journey, and from change of language, are also exceedingly great in an age when travel and commercial intercourse are easy and are bringing about the unification of the world in so many ways. This is an interesting problem suggested by the Conference of Peace, though not discussed by it.

The unique character of the Conference appeared in other ways. While French was the language of the Conference, one could hear among the delegates almost every civilized tongue. Reports were transmitted to the home governments in the perpendicular writing of the Orient, and in the right to left writing of the Middle East, as well as in the characteristic script of European speech. At the reception given to the Conference by the Queen, which every one attended in gala costume, the spectacle was very brilliant, because the representatives of every nation wore the uniform and orders of their rank. It led one of the delegates to remark that there had been no such gathering of the nations since the Congress of Vienna early in the century. But, indeed, except at Washington in 1889, there has been at no time any such

meeting; for the presence of Asia and America in conference with Europe is a thing still new in the world's history.

China, true to its conservative instincts, wore here as everywhere its characteristic dress. Japan and Siam, on the other hand, wore the dress of Europe, as if to emphasize their formal entry among the world's family of nations. The Turk with his red fez and the Persian with his black, while otherwise dressed as Europeans, seemed to illustrate how hard it is for the East wholly to assimilate itself to the West. The Americans in their evening dress were happily conspicuous for their simplicity. But, whatever the variety, there, as in everything relating to the Conference, was the predominating fact of unity. It was a gathering of the world's Powers on the basis of equality, each having one vote, and on the basis of recognized independence.

It will be observed, also, that among the nations represented there were all the great Powers of the world and many of the small ones; Powers that control great areas of the world's surface and influence great multitudes of the world's people, and Powers content to preserve and guard their own individuality in the small domains that are theirs; Powers also that are aggressive factors in the world's life, and Powers that find the forces of modern civilization in conflict with all that has been characteristic of their national history.

Under these circumstances, it might well have been imagined that some line of cleavage would show itself among the Powers in relation to the various questions to come before the Conference. Nothing of the sort occurred. Only at two points was there the slightest suggestion of differences between classes of Powers, as to questions of interest or point of view. When the plan for the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes was under consideration, the Balkan States showed great sensitiveness as to certain features of the plan, lest these should enable their powerful neighbors to interfere with their autonomy. These features were immediately modified or explained in such a way as to meet the views of the Balkan States. Again, on the question of forbidding the use of asphyxiating shells and of bullets that expand or flatten easily on entering the human body, the record reads as if it were the Anglo-Saxon against the world, for England and the United States were the only two Powers who voted against this prohibition.

It is worth while to go at some length into this subject, in order that the attitude of the American Delegation may be perfectly understood. Before doing so, however, it may tend to clearness to summarize the completed action of the Conference, as embodied in its final act. This document sets forth that the Conference has prepared, for submission to the Plenipotentiaries of the Powers, (1) three Conventions, (2) three Declarations; that it has adopted with unanimity a resolution to the effect that "the limitation of the military charges which at present so oppress the world is greatly to be desired, for the increase of the material and moral welfare of mankind"; and that it has passed six other resolutions, with differing degrees of unanimity, referring various questions for other and later consideration.

The questions referred for other consideration need only be briefly stated. The Conference expressed the hope that the Swiss Government would call an early meeting of a special Conference, to revise the Geneva Convention in relation to the Red Cross; that the Governments would make a special study of questions relating to muskets and marine artillery, with a view of reaching an understanding as to the adoption of new types and calibres; also, that the Governments would consider the possibility of reaching an understanding concerning the limitation of armed forces on land and sea, and of war budgets; and that some future Conference should consider all questions relating to the rights and duties of neutral States, the question of the immunity of private property in war on the high seas, and the question of the bombardment of ports, cities, and villages by a naval force.

The three Conventions embody the constructive work of the Conference. It suits best the scheme of this paper, however, to discuss first the three Declarations, for it was upon two of these that America and England were arrayed against the world.

The three Declarations were as follows:

1. A Declaration prohibiting the throwing of projectiles and explosives from balloons or by other new analogous means, such prohibition to be effective for five years.

2. A Declaration prohibiting the use of projectiles having as their sole object the diffusion of asphyxiating or deleterious gases.

3. A Declaration prohibiting the use of bullets which expand or flatten easily in the human body, as illustrated by certain given details of construction.

The action of the Conference in relation to asphyxiating shells is embodied in the Declaration which forbids "the use of projectiles having as their sole object the diffusion of asphyxiating or deleterious gases." In other words, if a shell in bursting asphyxiates incidentally it is permissible; but if it is not intended to burst but only to asphyxiate, it is forbidden. It may be remarked that no such shells exist as those which are thus forbidden. What may be the effect of such shells, therefore, if any such are ever made, is purely hypothetical. To forbid their use under such circumstances seems like paraphrasing Lord Dunsyre's famous question, "If you had a brother, would he like cheese?" Neither is it clear why shells which asphyxiate only should be forbidden, while shells which both explode and asphyxiate should be permitted.

The second question, as to bullets which expand or flatten easily in the human body, is more technical, but the objection to the action taken by the Conference can be made not less clear. The exact text of the Declaration adopted by the Conference reads as follows: "The contracting Powers forbid the use of bullets which expand or flatten easily in the human body, such as jacketed bullets of which the jacket does not entirely cover the core or has incisions in it."

The United States Delegation was at one with the representatives of the other Powers in willingness to forbid unnecessarily cruel bullets, and, in order to show this, the Delegation twice offered, once in Committee and once in the full Conference, a carefully drawn resolution forbidding all bullets of an unnecessarily cruel character. It is one of the curiosities of the parliamentary procedure in use at the Conference that, on neither occasion, could this resolution be brought to a vote. In Committee, the Chairman merely swept it aside, as being too vague; and, in the Conference, in order to avoid a hopeless tangle as to the status of the question as between the Declaration recommended by the committee and the resolution proposed on behalf of the United States, the Conference itself voted to give precedence to the Declaration coming from the committee, and, this being adopted, the Conference left the American resolution in the air. In other words, the United States wished to declare a principle; the Conference preferred to forbid a certain kind of bullet. The technical objections to the Declaration lie precisely in its details. It was forcibly

maintained by the United States ordnance expert, Capt. William Crozier, of the American Delegation, that it is quite conceivable that a ball should be invented for a smaller-calibre musket than any now in use, which, by expanding evenly, would be as effective as bullets of larger size without being in any way more cruel. It was also pointed out that inventors, in trying to avoid the details of construction prohibited by the Declaration, might easily be driven to the invention of bullets much more cruel as to the character of wounds that they would make, but which would yet be permissible because the Declaration hinges on details and not upon a principle. Incidentally, it came out in the discussion that the Declaration was aimed at a certain kind of bullet actually in use in the army of one of the Powers represented at the Conference. With this aspect of the question the Delegation from the United States naturally had no concern; but it showed its willingness, by the resolution which it offered, to join in the condemnation of this or any other bullet that might be shown to be unnecessarily cruel.

In view of the attitude of the United States Delegation towards these two proposals arbitrarily to limit the progress of invention in relation to weapons of war, it may be asked why, on the other hand, the Delegation joined in the Declaration of the Conference prohibiting "for five years, the throwing of projectiles and explosives from balloons or by other new analogous means." This Declaration, it will be observed, differs from the others materially in being limited to the term of five years. But, apart from that, there is a reason why, for the time being, this prohibition rests upon a recognizable principle. Up to the present moment, balloons are uncontrollable; they are the sport of the winds. Projectiles thrown from them, therefore, are as likely to injure non-combatants as combatants. They may also do merely useless damage; that is to say, damage that does not advance at all the military object of the fighting. Under these circumstances, the United States Delegation was glad to join in the Declaration of the Conference upon this subject, limited as it is to five years.

From these statements, it will be clear that the Delegation from the United States was not less willing than others to forbid useless cruelty in war. Perhaps it is also evident that the Delegation was not ready to encourage any mere limitations on invention in relation to warfare. This attitude is strictly in accord, not only with

the spirit of the instructions received by the Delegation, but also with the historic attitude of the United States. Wars are much less frequent in these days than they used to be; they are also much shorter in duration. Although more destructive while they last, it cannot be questioned that, by reason of their infrequency and their shorter duration, the sum of human misery which war inflicts is much less great in recent than in earlier times. As the engines of war increase in destructiveness, they usually become more costly; that is to say, both more expensive to make and more expensive to use. The fearful costliness of modern war is one very great restraint upon a resort to it. This is, probably, one of the reasons why, in America, it has never been thought wise to try to prevent the free application of invention to the improvement of the weapons and engines of war.

The famous circular of the Russian Government proposing the Conference emphasized especially the need of the nations for disarmament. Because nothing definite was done in this direction, there is an impression in many quarters that the Conference accomplished very little. If the Conference had been originally called to promote arbitration, the opinion would probably be general that it had accomplished a great deal. The detailed proposals submitted by the Russians under the head of disarmament were so incomplete that the subject, in all its details, was referred, almost without debate, to the further study of the Powers. On the other hand, the Conference adopted unanimously the following resolution: "The Conference believes that the limitation of the military charges which at present so oppress the world is greatly to be desired for the increase of the material and moral welfare of mankind." Undoubtedly, this is only an opinion and it has no binding force; but, clearly, it strengthens the hands of all who object to an increase of military burdens where they press heavily, and it places upon the Governments the necessity of justifying, not only to their own people but also to the public opinion of mankind, every increase in armaments.

It may properly be said that, apart from every other aspect of the question, the Conference was not well composed for action in this regard. The Powers of America and Asia were called upon to consider, so far as this question is concerned, what is, in many of its aspects, a purely European question. Nowhere else in the world is the whole male population trained to arms; and nowhere

else does militarism withdraw from the ranks of productive industry vast numbers of men, while at the same time making their support a charge upon industry. The American Delegation, in order to make clear its own conception of the situation, at the proper time placed on the records of the Conference the following declaration:

"The Delegation of the United States of America have concurred in the conclusions upon the first clause of the Russian letter of December 30th, 1898, presented to the Conference by the First Commission, namely: that the proposals of the Russian representatives, for fixing the amounts of effective forces and of budgets, military and naval, for periods of five and three years, cannot now be accepted, and that a more profound study upon the part of each State concerned is to be desired. But, while thus supporting what seemed to be the only practicable solution of a question submitted to the Conference by the Russian letter, the Delegation wishes to place upon the record that the United States, in so doing, does not express any opinion as to the course to be taken by the States of Europe. This declaration is not meant to indicate mere indifference to a difficult problem, because it does not affect the United States immediately, but expresses a determination to refrain from enunciating opinions upon matters into which, as concerning Europe alone, the United States has no claim to enter. The words drawn up by M. Bourgeois, and adopted by the First Commission,* received also the hearty concurrence of this Delegation, because in so doing it expresses the cordial interest and sympathy with which the United States, while carefully abstaining from anything that might resemble interference, regards all movements that are thought to tend to the welfare of Europe. The military and naval armaments of the United States are at present so small, relatively to the extent of territory and to the number of the population, as well as in comparison with those of other nations, that their size can entail no additional burden of expense upon the latter, nor can even form a subject for profitable mutual discussion."

The Conventions prepared by the Conference are entitled:

(1.) A Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes;

(2.) A Convention concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land;

(3.) A Convention for the Adaptation to Maritime Warfare of the Principles of the Geneva Conference of August 22, 1864.

It will be convenient to deal with the first Convention last. The Convention concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land is a development of the laws and customs of war proposed by the Brussels Conference of 1874, as those proposed regulations in turn, though perhaps less consciously, were a development of the

* The resolution already quoted in regard to disarmament.

laws of war formulated at the request of President Lincoln, during the American Civil War, by Prof. Francis Lieber of Columbia University in the City of New York. The general tendency of the rules embodied in this Convention is to lessen the suffering of individuals at the hands of armies, in time of war, and to place some limitations upon the action of invading armies. The United States Delegation left this Convention unsigned, in order that it may be carefully examined by the proper authorities, inasmuch as it will call for legislation by Congress if it be accepted; but the Delegation heartily recommends its acceptance.

The Convention for the Adaptation to Maritime Warfare of the Principles of the Geneva Convention of August 22, 1864, consists, in substance, of ten articles. So far as these articles relate to hospital ships carrying the flag of a belligerent, they mark an unquestionable advance in the direction of more humane conduct of naval war. Unfortunately, in providing for the use of hospital ships under neutral flags, and in referring to the picking up of men in the water by other vessels under neutral flags, the articles do not, in the opinion of the American Delegation, sufficiently determine the status of the men who may thus be rescued. Capt. Mahan proposed three additional articles to cover these points beyond a peradventure; but, when it became apparent that these additional articles could not be adopted, but would only lead to discussions that might imperil the ten articles already agreed to, Capt. Mahan, with the approval of the American Delegation, withdrew his proposed articles. The Delegation did not wish to embarrass the Conference with reference to the articles of the Convention as it now stands. At the same time, the American representatives did not sign this Convention, but referred it to their Government, without recommendation. The precise question to be determined is, whether the gain resident in the articles as they stand offsets the disadvantage of introducing new and doubtful questions with reference to neutral vessels near the scene of a naval battle.

The Convention for the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes is, undoubtedly, the most important work of the Conference. As the name implies, it is much more than a scheme for arbitration, though arbitration is a vital part of it.

The Convention consists of four Titles:

Title 1. Concerning the Maintenance of the General Peace.

Title 2. Concerning Good Offices and Mediation.

Title 3. Concerning International Commissions of Inquiry.

Title 4. Concerning International Arbitration.

Title 4 is sub-divided into Chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1 relates to the general subject of Arbitration, defines its object, and the like.

Chapter 2 relates to the Permanent Court of Arbitration, and provides for its establishment.

Chapter 3 relates to procedure in cases of arbitration, especially before the Permanent Court.

Title 1 of the Convention consists of only one article, but it explains the purpose of the whole Convention. This article reads as follows: "With the view of preventing, as often as possible, the resort to force between nations, the signatory Powers agree to employ all their efforts to assure the peaceful settlement of international differences."

By Title 2, the signatory Powers engage, in case of grave differences of opinion or of dispute, to have recourse, whenever circumstances permit, to Good Offices or Mediation. The Powers drifting towards war may themselves ask for such good offices from a friendly Power; or, neutral Powers may, at their discretion, tender such good offices. Such tender may be made even after a conflict has broken out, and in no case is it to be considered otherwise than as a friendly act. Each Power involved in the controversy retains, on the other hand, full liberty of action, both as regards the acceptance of good offices and as regards the result in the event of acceptance. A special form of mediation proposed by Mr. Holls, Secretary of the American Commission, was accepted unanimously by the Conference. It contemplates the appointment of a friendly nation to act as mediator by each one of the Powers involved in the dispute. These seconds, so to speak, are to endeavor together to find some basis of settlement which will avoid war, and failing in that, they remain charged with the duty of restoring peace at as early a day as possible.

By Title 3, the signatory Powers say, only, that "they judge it useful," in controversies of an international order, engaging neither honor nor essential interests, and involving a difference of opinion on questions of fact as to which the parties concerned have not been able to come into accord by the ordinary diplomatic methods, that these Powers should establish, whenever circum-

stances will permit, an International Commission of Inquiry, charged to facilitate a solution of the difficulty by throwing light upon the questions of fact, by means of an impartial and conscientious examination. The Powers concerned retain the right to give what force they please to the reports of such Commissions.

The propriety of such a provision, where the nations concerned are left free, can hardly be questioned. In the Venezuela Boundary dispute, the United States Government instituted an inquiry of its own as to a controversy between two other nations. It thus recognized the necessity, at times, for outside inquiry as to questions directly affecting other nations. In the case of the destruction of the "Maine," an international inquiry was proposed by Spain and declined by the United States. The latter instance shows that the proposed Convention adopted by the Conference of Peace simply regulates and defines the scope and significance of action already recognized in diplomacy. Every nation is left free to accept or decline such an inquiry, and also to accept or decline to accept the findings resulting from the inquiry.

By placing Title 4 concerning Arbitration in connection with the foregoing proposals, the Convention at once gives to arbitration a place among the recognized means of preserving the peace of the world. It is hoped, and it is expected, that it will more and more serve this high function. For this reason, among others, the resort to Arbitration, like the resort to Good Offices and Mediation and to International Commissions of Inquiry, is left wholly voluntary. This, in the judgment of the writer, is the strength and not the weakness of the plan. Obligatory arbitration, stretched to its utmost limit as a general obligation, could only cover unimportant matters. Such questions will always be settled, without any such obligation, either in the usual diplomatic way or by arbitration. But arbitration that is voluntary may, by mutual consent, be applied to the whole field of international controversy. It has already settled many grave and threatening international disputes, and in the future, it will doubtless settle many more. The question may be asked, if this is so, in what way has the Conference furthered the cause of arbitration? The writer would reply, (1) by giving to arbitration this recognized place among the means of preserving the world's peace; (2) by making notable provision for it through the establishment of a Permanent Court; and (3) by making a resort to arbitration easy.

At one point in the Convention there is a seeming departure from the voluntary character of the methods proposed for preserving the world's peace. Article 27 of this Convention reads: "The signatory Powers consider it a duty, in the case when an acute dispute threatens to break out between two or more of them, to remind these Powers that the Permanent Court is open to them. Consequently, they declare that the fact of calling the attention of the Parties to the provisions of the present Convention, and the advice given, in the higher interest of peace, to address themselves to the Permanent Court, cannot be considered otherwise than as acts of Good Offices."

When this section was literally read, it seemed to the American Delegation to confront the United States with a proposal to enter into an obligation to intervene, in the manner proposed, in every controversy that might arise between any of the signatory Powers; and to invite a similar course on their part towards the United States. Such an obligation and such an invitation, without any modification, might well be thought, as it appeared to the Delegation, to be in direct conflict with the historic policy of the United States in both directions. The American Delegation endeavored, therefore, to secure an amendment of Article 27 which would limit the duty accepted by the signatory Powers to the cases where circumstances would permit, thus making it clear, upon the face of the Article, that each nation was to judge for itself when the duty could properly be discharged. At an earlier stage of the Conference, such an amendment could probably have been made; for there was no hesitation, on the part of any one, in saying that the obligation created by the article was a moral duty, as to the performance of which each nation, in the nature of things, must be its own judge. On the other hand, it was pointed out that, at the end of the Conference, an attempt to amend the terms of the Article as agreed upon in Committee might lead to very serious results. Accordingly, the American Delegation contented itself by placing on the minutes of the Conference, when the Convention was about to be adopted, the following Declaration: "The Delegation of the United States of America, in signing the Convention regulating the peaceable settlement of international conflicts, as proposed by the International Peace Conference, make the following declaration: 'Nothing contained in this Convention shall be so construed as to require the United States of America to depart

from its traditional policy of not intruding upon, interfering with, or entangling itself in, the political questions or policy or internal administration of any foreign State; nor shall anything contained in the said Convention be construed to imply a relinquishment by the United States of America of its traditional attitude toward purely American questions.' ”

This Declaration having been read in full Conference, the Convention was immediately adopted by the Conference without dissent. The Convention was subsequently signed by the American Delegation subject to the reserve of this Declaration. The foregoing explanation will have made it clear that the Convention to which this Declaration applies is much more than a convention providing for a Permanent Court of Arbitration. The Convention cannot fail to be useful in promoting the peaceful settlement of international disputes, wherever such a settlement is possible; but, on the other hand, it appeared to be essential that the United States, in becoming a party to the Convention, should not, by the very act, appear to abandon policies that have become part of the nation's life. No such embarrassment confronted any other Power.

It is not proposed, in this article, to discuss the details of the Permanent Court of Arbitration. Briefly, each of the signatory Powers files in a Bureau at The Hague a list of not more than four names of men deemed by it to be well equipped to serve as arbitrators. This Bureau is administered by the Representatives of the signatory Powers accredited to The Hague, with the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs as Chairman. This Administrative Council conducts the central Bureau, appoints the Clerk of the Court, provides offices, and, in a word, attends to all the details. When an arbitration is desired, the Powers concerned agree upon its terms and indicate their arbitrators. While nations desiring to arbitrate are not confined in their choice to men whose names are upon the list, it is expected that the choice of arbitrators will ordinarily be made from this number. Indeed, the provision of these names is one of the ways in which arbitration has been made easy, as it is hoped by this means to avoid one of the difficulties, always felt in arranging for arbitrations hitherto; that is to say, the difficulty of finding suitable arbitrators. Up to this time it has been necessary, with great effort and delay, to construct every detail of the tribunal that is called into being to conduct such an arbitration. The Conference of Peace has constructed

all the standing parts, so to speak, of such a tribunal. It still remains necessary for the Powers concerned to agree upon the terms of the arbitration and upon the arbitrators; but, all that it is now necessary to do is to put together the parts of the machine that are, as it were, already assembled, instead of, as heretofore, being obliged to construct the parts as well as to put them together. The permanency of the Court and of the records is also a factor of the greatest importance; for permanency of court and of record takes for granted the gradual growth of a system of international jurisprudence, and such a system necessarily involves and must rest upon the idea of international justice. When these considerations are fully appreciated, it will be evident that the International Conference of Peace has justified its being.

The broad significance of the Convention for the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes may be stated in a single word. The Powers that give their adhesion to this Convention, when drifting toward war, may be called upon, by their own consent, to take the responsibility of declining to accept good offices, of declining to accept mediation, of declining to accept an international inquiry, and of declining to accept arbitration. This Convention proceeds upon the theory that a nation ought to be willing to accept these responsibilities, before resorting to arms, precisely as President McKinley, when the Spanish-American War was coming on, declined to accept an international inquiry in regard to the destruction of the "Maine," and told the representatives of the Powers, when they waited upon him, that a situation had grown up which was no longer tolerable to the American people. No one supposes that this Convention, even if universally signed, will prevent all war; but it will compel the nations, in a new way, to justify war to the public opinion of mankind.

All that a body of the nature of the Conference could do, has been done. It remains for other forces, and notably for public opinion in all the nations, to make effective what the Conference has proposed. In the opinion of the writer, there is no greater evidence of the wisdom of the Conference than that it has, thus fearlessly and confidently, left to public opinion the vitalization of its work. It is a happy augury that, before the Conference adjourned, the Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes was signed by the Plenipotentiaries of sixteen out of twenty-six of the Powers represented at the Conference, namely

by Belgium, Denmark, Spain, The United States of America, Mexico, France, Greece, Montenegro, Holland, Persia, Portugal, Roumania, Russia, Siam, Sweden and Norway, and Bulgaria. There seemed to be no reason to doubt, at the time of adjournment, that the other Powers would sign before the 31st of December. The question of ratification remains to be determined in every case, and it is impossible to predict by what date action on that point may be looked for in any of the nations. The public opinion of the United States may well address itself to securing the ratification of this Convention by the Senate when the Convention is submitted by the President.

SETH LOW.